



# 2009

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## **ARTS COMMISSION CELEBRATES 25 YEARS SUPPORTING LOCAL ART AT THE BLOCK ART GALLERY**

Over the past 25 years, the City of Raleigh Arts Commission has provided ongoing exhibition opportunities for more than 150 local artists, and helped create a lively downtown arts-friendly environment. In celebration of this achievement, the Arts Commission is sponsoring "Retrospective 25," which will be on display Oct. 1 through Nov. 6 in the Miriam Preston Block Art Gallery at the Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex, 222 W. Hargett St.

The exhibition showcases work from 25 artists who have exhibited throughout the years, providing a snapshot into the history of the gallery and development of the art scene in Raleigh. Paintings on view will include the work of late artists like George Bireline, Joe Cox, and Claude Howell, as well as recent work by current artists such as Marty Baird, Luke Miller Buchanan, and Joyce Watkins King. The artworks span painting, fibers, ceramics, photography and mixed-media.

"The Block Gallery is a wonderful resource for artists, students, and the wider Raleigh community," said Georgia Springer, whose work is included in Retrospective 25. Ms. Springer is one of the original exhibiting artists at the Block Gallery, formerly known as MBAE (Municipal Building Art Exhibitions).

"We are fortunate to have a City-sponsored gallery of such consistently strong quality over the past 25 years," Ms. Springer added. "In showing work of talented emerging artists as well as well recognized artists, the gallery has supported the growth of our vibrant visual arts scene. In addition, it has helped stimulate, delight and educate the interested public as well as those simply using the municipal building for daily activities such as attending City Council meetings or securing City permits."

The opening-day reception for “Retrospective 25” will be held on Thursday, Oct. 1 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Block Gallery. Mayor Meeker will offer remarks at 6 p.m. The reception will also feature music by the Enloe Jazz Trio of Enloe High School and a screening of Sally Van Gorder’s video, “Sift”, on the second floor. “Sift” documents young women in Doha, Qatar, juxtaposing their stories as they describe their experiences with still and moving images of the desert, sea, and urban landscape of Doha. Reception sponsors include Raleigh local businesses Escazu Chocolates and Helios Café.

“Retrospective 25” will present the work of the following artists: Marty Baird, George Bireline, Tina Bromberg, Luke Miller Buchanan, Joe Cox, Jason Craighead, Richard Garrison, Ann Harwell, Claude Howell, Herb Jackson, Mary Shannon Johnstone, Joyce Watkins King, Philip Lopez, Gayle Stott Lowry, Kathleen Rieder, Thomas Sayre, Brian Shawcroft, Nona Short, David Simonton, Tom Spleth, Georgia Springer, Wayne Taylor, Anthony Ulinski, Doug Van de Zande, and Sally Van Gorder.

Founded in 1984, the Miriam Preston Block Art Gallery connects local artists to community through ongoing exhibitions and public outreach. The gallery is located on the first and second floors of the Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex. The gallery is managed by the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, and was dedicated in 2006 to honor Miriam Preston Block, a former Raleigh City Council member and community leader. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. except on holidays.

Established in 1977 as the official advisory body and advocate for the arts to the Raleigh City Council, the City Raleigh Arts Commission holds the distinction of being the first municipal arts commission created in North Carolina. Serving as the leading force to champion the arts with Raleigh citizens and their representatives, the Arts Commission’s myriad activities foster, support, and promote the arts in the Capital City.

For more information, contact the Arts Commission office at 996-3610 or email Sarah Blackmon, gallery coordinator, at [sarah.blackmon@ci.raleigh.nc.us](mailto:sarah.blackmon@ci.raleigh.nc.us).

{**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Attached is image of “Messier 16,” artwork by Ann Harwell, }